



OPEN CATEGORY	Proposal cap
Flex grants	\$150,000

PROGRAM CONTACTS

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IMPORTANT RFP UPDATES AND AWARD CONDITIONS

(see p8 for full award conditions)

- Core Program funding is suspended in most areas for the period of January 2025 to October 2026 to accommodate priorities in other NPRB programs.
- This revised RFP is active July 2025 to September 2026 and is open to Flex Grants only.
- Funding decisions under this RFP will be announced May 2026 and October 2026.
- A new RFP will be released in October 2026.
- Flex grants are capped at \$150,000 and must be completed in a 12-month period.
- Flex grants are not eligible for extension.
- All projects must be completed no later than December 31, 2027.
- Proposal budgets are limited to a single organization. Any project partner organizations requiring funds should be included as a subcontract to the lead organization. See full budget instructions on p6.

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I. REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The North Pacific Research Board (NPRB) requests proposals for cooperative research designed to address pressing fishery management or marine ecosystem information needs through a competitive grant program, using a portion of the interest earned from the Environmental Improvement and Restoration Fund. These funds must be used to conduct research activities on, or relating to, fisheries and marine ecosystems in the North Pacific Ocean, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, Gulf of Alaska, and Arctic. NPRB prioritizes research that improves understanding of marine ecosystems and enhances effective fishery management and sustainable use of marine resources. Research may be conducted within any of the large marine ecosystems relevant to Alaska (i.e., Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, Aleutian Islands, and Chukchi and Beaufort seas).

Applicants have the option during the submission process to indicate interest in potential co-funding through collaborative arrangements with NPRB's funding partners listed in the proposal submission platform. Co-funded proposals will be shared with NPRB's funding partners if the applicant indicates interest in the submission form. Successful co-funded projects must include acknowledgement of the joint support provided.

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

THE CORE PROGRAM WILL ONLY ACCEPT FLEX GRANT PROPOSALS THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2026.

FLEX GRANTS (\$150,000 proposal cap)

- Flex grants must be selected during the submission process.
- Proposals may be a maximum of 12 months duration with no eligibility for extension.
- Proposals will follow the standard application format; however, it will be at the Applicant's discretion to scale the project description appropriately.

TOPICS OF INTEREST

OCEANOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTIVITY

- ocean-atmosphere forcing
- land-ocean exchange and biogeochemical cycling
- physical oceanography (e.g., water column structure, temperature, sea ice, advection, salinity)
- chemical oceanography (e.g., nutrients, ocean acidification, tracers)
- biological oceanography (e.g., process rates and linkages of microbes, phytoplankton, and zooplankton)
- pelagic, benthic, and ice habitats
- other oceanography and lower trophic level research, including modeling

FISHES AND INVERTEBRATES

- development and application of new assessment approaches
- estimation of life history parameters that impact stock assessments (e.g., age, growth, maturity, fecundity, natural mortality, environmental drivers, recruitment)
- spatial and temporal variation in stock structure and distribution patterns
- analyses of survey design and data (e.g., gear selectivity and species distribution/availability, influences of environment or habitat, linking multiple data sources, estimating parameter uncertainty)
- ecology and physiology of forage species (e.g., recruitment, growth, environmental linkages, and factors influencing availability to predators)
- bycatch and incidental catch (e.g., spatiotemporal distribution, ecological effects, discard mortality, and implications of management measures)
- characterization of habitat essential for spawning, nursery and feeding areas
- development of predictive models of habitat use and quality, including climate-driven shifts in habitat quality and availability
- direct and indirect effects of climate change and ocean acidification on fishes and invertebrates
- characterization of cross-species interactions (e.g., to support ecosystem-based management)
- other fishes and invertebrates research

MARINE BIRDS AND MAMMALS

- abundance, distribution, movement, and migration patterns
- ecology, physiology and/or vital rates
- responses to shifting physical environmental parameters or predator-prey interactions
- synergistic effects of multiple stressors on individuals and populations (e.g., anthropogenic impacts, ecological changes, pathogens, contaminants)
- population structure (e.g., dispersal statistics, genomics, connectivity)
- species interactions with anthropogenic maritime activities (e.g., vessel traffic, fishing, tourism, resource extraction)
- characterization of essential habitats
- other marine bird and mammal research

HUMAN DIMENSIONS

- individual and/or community wellbeing (e.g., influence of resource availability and/or access on wellbeing, indicators of wellbeing for marine-resource dependent communities)
- stewardship practices and/or values
- new tools, models, and frameworks to understand/predict implications of management decisions
- effectiveness and/or comparison of management regimes (e.g., ecosystem-based, dedicated access-based, conventional, local, traditional ecological)
- collection, synthesis and/or application of local or traditional knowledge
- implications and consequences of fisheries management for human behavior
- other research in human dimensions

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

- retrospective multispecies or biophysical studies using existing data and/or archived samples
- biological responses to physical drivers or conditions and/or predator-prey interactions
- interactions between multiple physical processes or multiple species across trophic levels
- synergistic effects of multiple stressors on individuals and/or populations (e.g., natural disturbance, anthropogenic impacts, ecological or environmental change, pathogens, contaminants)
- coupled ocean ecosystem models and stock assessment models, multispecies processes
- bio-economic models and management strategy evaluations (MSE)
- habitat characterization for multiple overlapping species
- co-production of knowledge: methods and application of integrating Indigenous, local, and scientific researchers and data

APPROACHES

Proposals are encouraged to incorporate one or more [APPROACHES](#). A description of how each selected approach improves the methods, study design, data collected, products from the research, and utility of the deliverables will be required during proposal submission.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. The project must be designed, co-designed or initiated by the relevant local community or communities. Evaluation of this approach will include: the degree to which the community or communities are directly engaged in the project (from conception and design to data collection, analysis, and dissemination), applicability to pressing community needs, and the extent to which the project will improve shared understanding between scientists and community members. Support letters from the relevant community institutions are also required at the time of submission.

COOPERATIVE RESEARCH WITH INDUSTRY. Evaluation of this approach will include: the degree to which the industry partner is directly engaged in the project (from conception and design to data collection, analysis and dissemination), applicability to pressing management needs of the industry, the extent to which the project will improve shared understanding between science and industry, the use of industry infrastructure for marine observations and industry-collected data, and the extent to which the project may promote future collaboration. Proposals must include a cooperative plan and support letters describing how the research and participants will benefit from the perspectives and skill sets of each partner.

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT. Proposals must develop new technology or validate new applications for existing technology. Proposals that develop new technology should indicate where it may be applied. Proposals incorporating existing technology must justify the novelty of its application.

DATA RESCUE. Proposals must include: a description of the current nature and state of the data (location, format, content, completeness, risk of loss), assurances that the data are not already a component of an accessible portal, an explanation of the utility of the dataset to relevant science and management issues, and a robust metadata and data management plan. Examples of eligible projects include: the preservation of specimens in permanent archives, transfer of outdated electronic records to current archiving methods, and transcription of hard copy records to accessible electronic formats. New data collection or analysis of existing samples does not qualify as data rescue.

III. PROPOSAL PREPARATION <https://proposal-dashboard.nprb.org/login>

All proposals are uploaded through the [NPRB dashboard](#) which is optimized for Google Chrome. Proposals may be accessed and edited up until the time of submission. Timeline, Budget, and Signatures templates are available in the respective sections of the submission portal.

TITLE & PERIOD (max. 100 characters). Allow a minimum of 6 months for review and administrative requirements. Standard start dates of July 1 or December 1 are recommended. Project duration should allow for final report preparation and include attendance at the Alaska Marine Science Symposium, closest to the completion of your project. If this is a resubmission of a previous proposal, describe any changes or improvements. Applicants should indicate if they wish to be considered for joint funding with additional institutions identified in the submission portal. Flex grants may have a maximum project period of 12 months.

ABSTRACT (max. 300 words). Explain how your research is relevant to the mission of NPRB using language understandable by the public.

CONTACTS

TYPE	ROLE	INFORMATION REQUIRED
Authorized Organizational Representative	Provides legally binding authorization for the organization	Contact information
Principal Investigator	Oversight of scientific content, project management and completion	Contact information CV (maximum 2 pages)

Co-Investigator (where applicable)	Participates in the project but is not responsible for overall management or completion	Contact information Specific expertise or relevance to the team may be outlined in the Project Management section. Letters of Support are encouraged for any unfunded participants. CVs (maximum 2 pages) may be uploaded in Supplemental Documents for up to 3 additional team members.
Invoicing Contact	Responsible for invoicing	Contact information including remittance address
Grants Manager	Responsible for the financial administration of the grant (e.g., Office of Sponsored Programs)	Contact information
Suggested Reviewers	Individuals not associated with investigators or institutions submitting this proposal, but with sufficient expertise and credentials to review the proposal in an objective manner	Contact information
Unacceptable Reviewer	Individuals identified by the project team as inappropriate for review	Contact information

DESCRIPTORS Identify the category, relevant large marine ecosystem(s), approach (if applicable), species identification (if applicable) and proposal keywords. Justification for the selection of any approach must be provided.

BACKGROUND (max. 1,000 words) Proposals will be evaluated on their understanding of the problem being addressed, the present state of knowledge in the field, and the measurable benefits that will result from the proposed research. Objectives, hypotheses, and experimental design should be included in later sections. It is highly recommended that large amounts of text be prepared in Word or a similar application to be cut and pasted into this section.

OBJECTIVES (max. 60 words each) Objectives should be concise, lie within the scope of the project, and provide a discrete intended outcome. Multiple objectives may be included using the “Add Objective” button at the bottom of the page. The order of the objectives may be changed using the drag and drop feature.

DESIGN & APPROACH (max. 4,000 words) Experimental design and methods should be presented with clear hypotheses. Detail any field logistics and animal handling. Include the statistical and analytical approach, including assumptions, sample size required, and model validation. A power analysis is recommended where applicable. Figures, Tables, and Equations should be uploaded in the following section.

FIGURES (max. 4), **TABLES** (max. 2) & **EQUATIONS** (unlimited) All files in this section are optional and should be uploaded in PDF format. Figure legends and table headers should be included in each file as part of the image. Multiple equations may be included in a single PDF upload. Figures, tables, and equations included in the proposal must be directly referenced in the narrative. The applicant is

responsible for ensuring that the resolution and size of each file conforms to one standard page. Posters are not acceptable as figures.

MANAGEMENT OR ECOSYSTEM IMPLICATION (max. 300 words) Describe how the research addresses pressing fishery management or ecosystem information needs. This section is an important review component for the NPRB science and advisory panels and board of directors.

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (max. 500 words) Outreach and engagement among stakeholders and/or target audiences is expected of all proposals, regardless of the type of study. Emphasis should be placed on the incorporation of clear, project-appropriate methods of communication and participation and/or engagement. Innovative approaches to the inclusion of local and/or traditional knowledge, communities, and/or stakeholders in project planning is encouraged. Proposals for research engaging or impacting Alaskan communities are encouraged to include a letter of support from the appropriate local or tribal governing bodies at the time of submission.

LINKS TO PRIOR NPRB PROJECTS (max. 300 words) Describe any links to projects previously funded by NPRB, including work by members of the current project team as well as other groups on the same topic as relevant.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT (unlimited words) Describe how the team's expertise relates to successful completion of the project. Explain the coordination and collaboration plan for multiple institutions, and to other ongoing or submitted projects. Define the anticipated dissemination of results. Identify permits required, however, all permits are the responsibility of the Applicant.

TIMELINE & MILESTONES (required template download) The submission platform will autofill a timeline template with project dates and objectives. Enter the person(s) responsible for each task. Finalize the **TITLE & PERIOD** and **OBJECTIVES** before downloading the template. Any changes to these components after the timeline upload will not auto-update until the existing file is deleted. Alaska Marine Science Symposium attendance is not mandatory but encouraged.

BUDGET (required template download). Submit only ONE budget. Any partner organizations requiring funds should be included as a contract under the lead organization. If the project cannot be completed with a single budget, please contact the Program Manager prior to submission.

- All budgets should be prepared in US currency to the nearest dollar.
- Cost sharing is not required but leveraging other support is encouraged.
- Budget Summary (download required template). Complete and upload the provided Excel template. Budget summaries for included contracts may be uploaded as additional information in Supplementary Documents.
- Organizations with NICRA. A copy of the current federally negotiated indirect cost-rate agreement (NICRA) is required for all organizations requesting indirect cost recovery greater than 15% of total direct costs.
- Organizations without NICRA. Organizations without a current federally negotiated NICRA may request a 15% indirect cost recovery. A memo to this effect specifically identifying the institution should be uploaded in lieu of a NICRA.
- Profit is not an allowable cost.
- Organizations requesting funds must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and be actively registered with the System of Award Management ([SAM.gov](https://sam.gov)).

- Single Audit (formerly A-133). If your organization is required to complete a Single Audit (formerly A-133), please provide a link to the most recent copy. If your organization is exempt from the requirements of a Single Audit, please upload a word document to indicate the reason from the list below:
 - US domestic entity that did not expend \$750,000 or more in US Federal funds during the latest completed fiscal year
 - US domestic for-profit organization
 - Non-US based entity that did not expend \$750,000 or more in US Federal funds during the latest completed fiscal year
 - US federal government agency

SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS (Letters of Support, up to 3 additional CVs, Quotes for contractors or large purchases, budget details for subawards, MOUs, fringe memos and W9 information) All letters of support are due at the time of submission and are highly recommended for any non-funded collaborators. Up to three 2-page CVs for project team members (other than the PI, required in **CONTACTS** section) may be included. Quotes should be provided for contracted services or large equipment purchases. Budget details for any subawards or partners may be included here. A memo outlining the types of expenses included is required for any fringe rate over 35% unless these details are included in the NICRA documentation (see **BUDGET**). Please provide a completed W-9. W-8 EXP is acceptable for foreign organizations.

REVIEW CRITERIA This section is designed to identify the relevant fields of expertise applicable to review the proposal, not the expertise of the applicant. If no fields on the page apply, leave it blank and move to the next page. A minimum of 5 identifiers is required.

REFERENCES List all sources of information cited in a consistent format appropriate for a major journal, such as ICES Journal of Marine Science.

UPLOAD SUMMARY This page will display a list of all uploaded documents.

SIGNATURES The signature by the Authorized Organizational Representative on this page certifies that the proposal, in its entirety, has been submitted according to the submitting organization's standard proposal approval process.

REVIEW & SUBMIT Use the PDF download tool to review prior to your final submission. Proposals may not be modified after submission.

IV. PROCESS & REVIEW

PROPOSAL CONFIDENTIALITY Full proposals are confidential within the constraints of peer review until U.S. Secretary of Commerce approval. Proposals that indicate their willingness to be considered for co-funding opportunities may also be reviewed by the board and advisory bodies of the partnering organizations.

CONSULTATION WITH INTERESTED PARTIES The board and staff may consult with NOAA and other federal and state agencies, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, and other entities, as appropriate, who may be affected by or have knowledge of a specific proposal or its subject matter.

RESPONSIVENESS Proposals that do not meet RFP requirements or responsiveness standards will be disqualified prior to peer review. Notification of disqualification will be provided by Staff.

PEER REVIEW Regional, national, and international experts are invited to provide independent, anonymous reviews in compliance with the NPRB Conflict of Interest Policy.

SCIENCE PANEL A minimum of two science panel members provides individual and summary evaluations to the full panel that incorporate the findings of external peer reviews. Each proposal is assigned into one of the following Tiers:

Tier E. Exceptional. Proposals deemed as exceptional science with an additional element of time sensitivity, technical robustness, or specific responsiveness to the RFP.

Tier 1. Excellent/Very Good. Proposals deemed as excellent or very good science.

Tier 2. Very Good/Good. This tier is considered the baseline expectation for a funded proposal. These proposals represent solid science with expectations of success but with room for refinement or clarification.

Tier 3. Fair/Poor. Tier 3 proposals are not candidates for funding.

ADVISORY PANEL The advisory panel will review Tier E, 1 and 2 proposals for special stakeholder or public interest, community and other societal relevance, timeliness, engagement strategy and added value. After this first round of review, highlighted proposals may receive an additional endorsement to recognize outstanding engagement.

BOARD The board will consider peer reviews, science panel, and advisory panel input for proposals ranked Tier E, 1 or 2. Scientific merit will be the primary criterion; however, other factors may be considered, including but not limited to:

- pressing fisheries management needs
- ecosystem information needs
- other projects currently funded on a similar topic
- overlap with other ongoing programs
- competitiveness relative to other proposals of equal merit within a topical area
- category target funding amounts published in the RFP
- previous performance of applicants.

Peer reviews, science panel summaries and board funding recommendations will be provided to the applicant.

SECRETARY OF COMMERCE All recommendations of the Board are subject to final approval by the Secretary of Commerce, who must ensure that the project recommendations are consistent with the terms of the NPRB grant award, federal law, and the enabling legislation.

V. AWARD ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS

This revised 2025 RFP is a solicitation of offers and should not be construed as an expectation of award. The NPRB is not obligated to award any specific project, number of projects or available funds. No oral statement by any person can supersede or modify the terms of this RFP. In accordance with federal statutes and regulations, no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under this program on grounds of race, color, age, sex, national origin, religion, marital status, pregnancy, parenthood, or disability.

In responding to this RFP, the applicant acknowledges agreement with all the conditions below. If your organization is awarded funding, you will be required to agree to these terms in the signed subaward agreement.

1. Most federal, state, private, and foreign organizations are eligible. Please contact the Program Manager in advance of submission if there are eligibility questions.
2. In response to Russian Federation's (Russia) ongoing aggression in Ukraine following its further invasion of the country, award funds may not be used to support Russian Nationals for any purpose, including financial support to students or interns.
3. Agreements not fully executed within four months of receipt will be considered declined by the Recipient organization and NPRB may reallocate funds at their discretion.
4. Recipient organizations must have a UEI number (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>) and an active registration in www.sam.gov, before any award can be issued. Recipient organizations required to have a single or program-specific audit will be required to submit a copy of their most recent single or program-specific audit for review before any award is made.
5. Awards are provided as reimbursable funds with quarterly invoicing.
6. Any award made will be subject to and the Recipient will comply with the U.S. Constitution, federal, state and local laws and regulations in the performance of the Scope of Work and in the performance of the terms and conditions of this Agreement, including but not limited to [2 C.F.R. Part 200](#), Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions, NOAA Administrative Standard Award Conditions and all special conditions to the [Prime Award](#).
7. "Fly America Act" (49 USC § 40118) regulations apply to all travel.
8. By responding to this RFP, all institutions awarded funding agree to accept the terms of:
 - NPRB's [Compliance Policy](#). The policy is based on federal law that governs award agreements and on comments received in response to an interim compliance policy from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Federal Law Assistance Division, the National Science Foundation, and grants managers from five major research institutions.
 - NPRB's standard "[Applicable Law, Jurisdiction and Venue](#)" clause, unless prohibited by law. The clause reads: This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Alaska except to the extent preempted by United States Federal law. Jurisdiction for the resolution of any dispute between the parties shall be in a court of competent jurisdiction. This Agreement shall be interpreted, construed, and enforced in accordance with applicable Federal and State law.
 - NPRB's standard "[Hold Harmless and Indemnification](#)" clause, unless prohibited by law. The clause reads: Each party to this Agreement agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the other party from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, expenses, fees (including attorneys' fees), and damages arising from or pertaining to the performance of this Agreement, but only in proportion to and to the extent such claims, liabilities, losses, expenses, fees (including attorneys' fees), and damages are caused by or result from the negligent or intentional acts or omission of the indemnifying party, its officers, agents or employees.
9. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all federal, state, and local governmental permits and approvals for projects or activities to be funded under this announcement. All experiments must be

conducted in compliance with the law, and only pursuant to mandatory permitting duly granted by the appropriate federal and state agencies. Researchers applying to do research involving human subjects are expected to demonstrate compliance with regional protocols for researcher/community interactions or the specific human subjects screening done by most academic institutions and agencies. Funded participants are responsible for the conduct of research, submission of required reports, and preparation of the results for publication. Significant deviation from the proposed activities and deliverables requires prior NPRB approval.

10. If a Recipient will be aboard or piloting a Federally-owned or leased vessel/boat/ship, the Recipient must obtain prior approval through NPRB from the Federal Program Officer and provide proof of sufficient insurance, or if a governmental entity, provide a copy of the statutory authority covering its liabilities connected with use of a Federal Government vessel/boat/ship. The Recipient agrees to release, indemnify and hold harmless the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, its officers, agents, and employees from any and all liability or costs resulting from the negligent use or operation of a Federally-owned or leased vessel/boat/ship, by employees, agents, officers, students, invitees, and guests of the Recipient. Only these listed University parties will be allowed on these vessels/boats/ships.
11. Participants will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports. Failure to submit timely reports or to meet project objectives may result in withheld payments. New funding may be suspended until all issues with open awards are resolved to NPRB's satisfaction.
12. A final report package will be required within 60 days of the end of the project that consists of a written report, and a copy of the data associated with the project and associated metadata. Failure to complete this reporting to the satisfaction of the Program Manager may result in withheld payments of final project costs and preclude acceptance of new proposals.

This RFP will remain in effect until September 30, 2026.
